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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BEDBUG

PROGRAM..... RELEASE Tues., Oct. 5,1926.

SAMPLE (not for release)

I'm mighty glad you folks listening in tonight can't see me. I'm a bedbug. But no kin to the radio bug. If you could see my little flat, red body, you'd probably squash me. I don't know why folks in this country have taken such a dislike to me and my race! Everywhere people are trying to kill us bedbugs. Looks as if we'd have to get deportation papers and go back to Asia.

We're all in the country illegally, I guess. None of us ever had a permit to enter. Some of our ancestors came over in the Mayflower. My ancestors lived in Asia and later in Rome. Those must have been the dignified days. Then, bugs could live without being gassed or burned.

My ancestors were called Cimex, which doesn't sound so bad. But when the old folks migrated to England in 1503 and later came to the Colonies, this deuced American slang wiped out our good old family name and now we're just called -- Bedbugs.

When my ancestors came over in the Mayflower, they were the only ones who didn't get seasick. Great-grand-ma -- I don't know how many "greats" should go before the grand-ma -- crawled into an old carpet-bag and bummed her way across. By the time the Mayflower anchored on this side of the Atlantic, there were thousands of my great-aunts and great-uncles ready to land. Other families sneaked into the country every time a boat came over from Europe. All the clans lived in the seacoast towns for a while, but the folks soon saw grand opportunities for migration, and went West and South.

I was born about five years ago behind the mop-board in a bedroom. Most bedbugs are born and live in dirty rooms, but I have often lived in clean places. I remember when I was about three months old, I went with a bunch of other bugs to have dinner. You know, we live mostly on human blood. Just as I was puffed up with food, I heard someone yell, "I smell bedbugs!" I crawled away as fast as I could -- but a lot of the other fellows were killed.

That "buggy" odor of ours always gives us away! I hid in the old crevice behind the mop-board. The man thought he'd starve me out. But I stayed there for three months without a bite to eat. Shucks, that's nothing -- I have friends who lived once nearly a year without eating. It's mighty hard to starve

bedbugs. I got tired of that house. They got next to our ways and keep things too clean. One day I hid in the cuff of the man's trousers and then when he got on a street car, I crawled into a crack of the wooden seat. As soon as another man sat down, I sneaked into his pocket and went home with him.

Living was a lot easier at that place, 'cause the rooms weren't so clean and I had more places to hide. However, the house was soon sold and the new owners fumigated the rooms with hydrocyanic acid gas. That's poison, Luckily, I escaped, but all my pals were smothered. I've lived many places since then -- in cracks of wooden beds, -- behind bits of torn wallpaper, and in many other places.

At one old house, red ants came in -- they're our worst natural enemies, you know. I saw them coming, so I shouted to the fellers to line up for trouble. It was no use all of us tryin' to hide in a crack, 'cause those ants could have gone any place we could. Well, we lined up in battle formation and tried to make those ants think they didn't have a chance. But they came tearin' into us. I saw it was no use, so I slipped into a crack and watched the fight. Gosh, do you know that those little ants, lots smaller than our fellers, simply picked Bill, an' Tom, an' Jack, and the other bedbugs right up off the floor and carried 'em away. I suppose they ate 'em, but I didn't wait to see. I made my get away as soon as I could!

At another place the man kept the rooms too cold, so I left. I like the temperature to be about 70 degrees, Once, too, the housewife burned sulphur in the rooms and only a few of us got away. My brother Jimmy escaped with me, so the two of us went to a neighboring house. I think we crawled in by some water pipes. Jimmy was hungry, so he went out in the broad daylight, looking for something to eat, and he got stepped on. But most of us bedbugs have enough sense to hide during the day. It's dark when we have our fun.

Now I'm living in this western town and I have a pretty good time. Occasally I go out with the fellers to annoy people when they're trying to sleep. The other day I heard a big fat man with spectacles say we bedbugs had caused a disease to be carried -- that tickled me. I'm getting a little old, so I'm not so particular about my food any more. If I can't find a human, why I get some blood from a rat,

But as I said at first, people are beginning to make it hot for us in thi country. Agricultural colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture have put out bulletins, telling folks how to kill us all, and I hear that many people are writing for these bulletins so they can learn all about us. Oh, well, if I get scared I'll just climb into a suitcase and go back to Europe. Perhaps then I could change my name from "Bedbug" to something nice like

"Cimex" or "Red Coat". I'm sure of one thing -- if I go to another country I'm going where people aren't so well educated, 'cause it seems that as soon as folks get an education they start fumigating and raising heck with us fellers.

ANNOUNCEMENT: You just heard the first of our bug and rodent talks -- a regular Thursday feature for the future. Next week, at this time, we're going to introduce an old gray rat, a notorious fellow who has had a colorful career to tell you about.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

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PROGRAM Autobiographies of Infamous Bugs and Rodents. RELEASE Tues. Oct. 19, 1926

ANNOUNCEMENT: Last Tuesday at this time you heard an old gray rat boast of his distinctive record. His rival, the termite, is booked for a talk tonight. This is the little "flying ant" you may have heard about. The fellow that silently destroys our houses while we go about never suspecting. Suppose we hear his side of the story.

* * * * * *

Scientists call me "Ter-mite." But I'm only a soft, sly "white ant."

A sly chap -- if I do say it myself. I'm a destroyer. A home wrecker. For years I've done millions of dollars damage to American homes and until just lately -- got away with it. Sly? You'll have to admit it. If the wood parts of your house are touching the earth--and weren't treated with coal tar creosote--Beware!

Bed-bugs and rats work in the night, - come out in the dark. I seldom come out at all.

You won't hear me boring in the night. You won't hear me scratching in the attic. I'm a little, soft, sly ghostly thing that bores from within -- but never through the top surface. First thing you know, your house falls -- or a chair breaks through the floor -- or your valuable books are eaten into and ruined.

A sly chap, all right. Watch me -- if you can. I'll teach you a few lessons in underground work -- never heard of before.

Oh, yes, -- my brothers and sisters: the flying "termites," come out in the open. They have fine white wings, and eyes. The sun doesn't bother them. But I haven't even wing sprouts. And the heat of the sun kills me. I'm a "worker" termite and I live down warm, dark, moist underground passageways. I bore through wood. Eat out the inside of wood and leave the shell. Usually we're not discovered until we've done our ruinous work.

If I'm not near the moist earth, I can't last long. Smart builders now-a-days head us off by keeping all the wood parts of the house away from the ground, and on brick and concrete foundations.

The chances are you've never even seen me. I doubt if you'd recognize my small, yellowish-white body? It's only about the size of a good grain of wheat.

Yet there are billions of my kind boring around on the under-side of things. Billions and billions of us are working day and night from Canada southward. It would surprize to really know the damage we do.

But the joke's on you -- even then. Instead of being alarmed at the signs of our damage, you merely say, "those flying ants are a nuisance. Must come in from outdoors or else with that cordwood in the basement". You sweep us up and forget us until next spring. It's a good thing you don't know we're pulling your houses down about your civilized ears.

We can't get along without moisture and our main weakness is that we have to go back and forth from the woodwork to the earth to get it. We don't often fly into your houses. We get in there because wood in foundations is placed on or in the ground. I'm telling you a secret -- don't give it away.

I understand the Government is advising house builders never to place wood, not treated with a pre-ser-va-tive, in or on the ground. Also to use concrete or brick foundations with hard mortar between the bricks. And also to treat wooden foundations with coal tar creosote.

I'm afraid this is the beginning of the end for us. How are we going to get into buildings if you build that way? Or, if we even get in, how are we to get our necessary moisture? I wish you folks listening to my story tonight would have a heart.

The other day I heard a woman crying. She's the young wife of the man who owns the house where we live. She was crying because my friends and I ate up part of her new oak floor and a fine rug laying on the floor. She wanted to know how they were ever going to pay for repairs on the house when they still owed money on the house itself. She wondered why they bought such a "poorly built house". The house wasn't poorly built. I never ate better oak in my life. And "Termie", my brother, says the rug was excellent.

But I'm afraid this isn't going to last long if the building regulations are changed to keep us out. We'll have to get out and move to places where the people haven't learned our sly ways. We fooled them for years, at any rate, and thats some consolation. Next time your chair leg breaks through a floor you thought was perfectly solid: Remember me. Good night.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The sly old Ter-mite or flying ant, as we call them, that just revealed some of his bad habits was sly enough not to tell you that the U. S. Department of Agriculture has some crackerjack bulletins on control of all kinds of ants. Send your requests through this station and they will be referred on to the proper authorities at Washington. Next week at this period a rabbit will tell his story.

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Autobiography of a Rat. Tue., Oct.12

PROGRAM..... RELEASE.....

ANNOUNCEMENT: Tonight we're going to introduce you to an old grey rat -- a notorious fellow with a colorful career. A proud, haughty, rat that boasts of his evil record. This series of biographies, a regular Thursday feature, comes to you through the courtesy of the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington. Mr. Rat.

* * * * * *

I'm a rat. I'm an old, grizzled rat, and my forefathers sailed with the pirates on the high seas. Sometimes, in the sea-fights, the ships were sunk and the crews went down with them. But my forefathers didn't go down with the crews. They were better pirates than the pirates. They's swim to another ship and go on with their pleasant trade of breaking into the food supplies and poisoning the sailors' rations. I've always made my living by piracy and death. I'm an old, grizzled rat -- and proud of my evil record.

My forefathers for all I know may have lived down on the sweltering docks of Calcutta. They've followed man into every clime. With their numerous families, they lived in the ancient slave ships and spread diseases to men that made them die in misery. Wherever men go, there go I, carrying disease, poisoning men's food, wasting their supplies. I carry the trichina worm to pigs. Men who eat the infected meat may die. Oh, I'm a brave fellow, I am. I fear men -- but I like men's food.

And I have a history, too. My forefathers came to America in colonial times and we have been here, increasing in numbers, ever since. No wonder we increase so fast. My mate and I could produce 360,000,000 rats in three years--if you'd leave us alone, and none of us died.

I live under grain cribs and bins. In the night I creep out and gnaw holes in floors/walls and doors. Then I get into the grain and eat what I want. I live in holes under hen houses. I creep out in the night into the henhouse and eat the chickens' feed. I like eggs and young chicks too. Maybe, in a pinch, - if I'm especially hungry, - I'll gnaw at the hens' legs and their tail feathers. If there are any dead rats around, I eat them. I'm not particular. I eat anything, whether it's clean or not. I'll eat meat, vegetables, grain, eggs, chickens, clothing, leather, bedquilts -- anything. Every year I destroy $200,000,000 worth of food and other property in the United States alone. Think of what YOU could buy with that money! A whole fleet of pirate ships. Think of the food of YOURS I eat! You'll not find better pirates than rats. Old Billy Bones wasn't in it, I tell you. Only ONE Billy Bones and he didn't last long. Billions of rats. Some of us are always at work eating food that belongs to somebody else, spoiling food, gnawing into foundations and weakening buildings, eating into lead pipes and making them leak, causing fires, making people sick. I get into warehouses and eat

some of the food, -- spoil some of the rest. The holds of ships have always been a favorite home with me. I like to eat, -- especially at night. Midnight suppers are my favorite. Maybe you've heard me gnawing, gnawing, in the still hours of the night.

But we can't live where there isn't any food, for the simple reason that we can't live without food. When people protect their food, their chickens, and other things we like, we leave their places as soon as we can.

A few years ago I had a sad experience. I had just settled down in a little town. I made a lot of friends there, among the other rats. About 50 of us lived in a farmer's barn. He had a lot of wheat and corn in the bins, some good fresh harness hanging on pegs, and a good coop of chickens near by. We had a fine time for a while, eating the grain, the leather, and chickens. One night we had a party. A regular pirates' party, with lots of food and noise and fighting. We thought it would be good fun to get into the house where we knew there was a flock of young chickens and kill a few of them. Have a chicken dinner. It was easy to get in. The coop didn't have any floor, or deep foundation, and the windows were open. Some of us went in through a big crack at the bottom of the door. I guess we made a lot of noise because I remember the chickens cackled and squawked a lot. Pretty soon we saw a light at the door. That made us suspicious and we stopped to see what was going to happen. Then the door opened and the farmer came in. Most of us got away by scurrying through the door and down holes -- but the old man kicked a particular friend of mine and laid him out. We laid low for a night or two after that and didn't go near the chicken coop.

A few days later there was a lot of excitement around the farm. The farmer got mad and decided to clean us out. So he got his two sons, a couple of dogs, and some stuff that made us sick when we ate it. Then he went all through the barn, cleaned up the rubbish we had been living in, drove us out of the corners everywhere and killed a lot of my friends. That man didn't take any chances. He cleared up hay and straw stack bottoms, cribs, bins, rubbish piles. But the farmer wasn't satisfied even then. He fastened a long hose to the exhaust pipe on his automobile. He poked the free end of the hose into the entrances of our burrows and then started the engine running. The fumes were terrible. When we came up for air, half-smothered, his sons and the dogs pounced on my friends and killed them. I got away.

So I left that place and moved on to another. A couple of my friends also got away, but they told me that living on that farm got so hard after that that they had to get in the house and gnaw at the farmers shoes. When one of my friends starved, the other ate him.

The first night at John Doe's place, (that's where I went next), I visited the corn crib to see what I could see. I found that he had built the crib on posts so that the floor was 3 feet from the ground. Well, of course I tried climbing one of the poles, but when I got to the top I found the rim of a tin pan sticking out and I couldn't get over that, and he had fixed every post that way. I decided I'd have to try the chicken coop. Well, it wasn't so good. Not even an old pirate like me could get into that man's coop. Think of it, -- a little chicken coop holding a pirate back! But that farmer had built his coop with a cement floor and foundation and had made the doors rat proof, - and the lower parts of the walls also. I gave up the coop and decided to find a home under his house and try the

pantry some night. That's usually dangerous because there may be a GOOD cat around. Cats don't generally bother me much, but sometimes you find one that never sleeps and has mighty sharp claws.

I managed to get into the pantry through a hole in the floor. This farmer had looked out for his poultry better than for his wife and family. It was quiet in there and I didn't figure anything would happen. It was a bit dark and I didn't notice at first something that was near the hole. I smelled toasted cheese and, looking 'round, I saw a funny thing that looked suspicious to me. I've had a lot of experiences and am getting careful as I get older. The smell of cheese came from near the queer thing I saw. Then I saw another rat creeping up to the cheese. I squealed and ran for it but the other fellow beat me to it. When he took hold of the cheese there was a little noise: SNAP, -- and something came down awfully fast on the other rat's neck and held him. I scurried out without even getting what was left of the cheese. Next day I left that farmer's place.

Some human beings are awfully tough on us. They hunt us with dogs and clubs. They shoot us with guns. They plug up our holes with cement that has broken glass in it. They keep us from our food by putting it in safe places that we can't get through. They don't encourage us very much. They choke us in traps. They keep cats and dogs to kill us. They clean up their premises and make it so hard for us to hide that we can't get away from our enemies. They poison us with strychnin, barium carbonate (which doesn't smell or taste), with arsenic, and other things. They smother us with poison gas and drown us by turning water into our holes. They feed us fine food like meat and fish, oatmeal and cheese, melon and boiled carrots -- and other thingswe like, -- but when we eat them we die and we don't know what killed us.

Some men make it fine for us. They leave their garbage cans open. They throw scraps of lunch and bits of the waste from dinner where we can get them. The old buildings are easy to live in. Plenty of room under the floors. Plenty of hiding places in piles of rubbish. We like to live in these places.

I'm the greatest old pirate that ever pestered the human race. I caused more loss in the United States last year than the biggest fleet that was ever sunk was worth. You'd better watch me if you want to know how robbing's done. I'm master at that craft. There are millions and millions of me and I'll get something of yours if you don't watch out.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: If you want to know how to get rid of rats, ask the Department of Agriculture for Bulletin No. 1302-F, listen, thirteen hundred and two F.

These autobiographies of bugs and rodents features by this station each Thursday at this hour are under the auspices of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. If you wish more detailed information about how to get rid of rats write for the government rat bulletin. Send your request through this station or direct to Washington.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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PROGRAM Autobiographies of Infamous Bugs and Rodents. RELEASE Tue., Oct. 26

ANNOUNCEMENT: At this time each Tuesday we bring to you the autobiography of a bug or rodent from the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Today the rabbit has his turn and must admit his guilt as a frequent offender in the orchard and garden.

* * *

"Say, do you know what I like?

"Well, I'll tell you.

"What I like is an autumn night with the golden Harvest moon shining big and round throughthe trees in your orchard -- and plenty of good fruit on the ground for me to eat. But I surely hope you keep the dog chained up!

"What I like is a summer night -- warm and balmy -- with every body asleep but me and my friends (and, maybe, the wind and the moon) AND -- a good, big garden to get into and eat my fill of your best vegetables. But I hope you never fence that place with wire netting!

"And, say ---

"What I LIKE is a winter night when the Snow Moon's light is turning blue the drifted, crusted snow in the young orchard. What'll I do then? You'll know in the morning. I'll get in that orchard and eat young, sweet, tender bark off the trunks of young fruit trees. They may die on you, but I can't help that. And then I'll call my friends to the feast and soon you may not have a single young fruit tree alive in that orchard. But -- I HOPE YOU WON'T POISON THE BARK. That's our ruination. And another thing I DON'T like is a rabbit hunt. Folks I'm just a shy, sly cottontail rabbit but my teeth are as sharp as a January blizzard. You all know me. You've seen me bobbing down the road in front of your car's head-lamps, when you've been driving through the woods on a clear, still moonlit night. You can tell me by the flag of truce I fly. I don't look like much, but it doesn't take many of us rabbits to "girdle" your fruit trees and kill them as surely as an ax would.

"Live and let live's my motto. But I do wish people would leave us alone. I, personally, would certainly like the free run of your garden in spring and summer, and your orchard in the fall and winter. My friend, Jack, says to put in a good word for him. He says he wouldn't mind the free run of your grain fields. Jack needs a lot of free space to run. He covers so much ground, you know."

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"Yes, sir. Live and let live is our motto. You ought to see us out there in your meadow! If you could see us eating the grass you wanted for your stock you'd probably say that we shouldn't have much trouble living. And not only that. We raise a great many young during a year and if it wasn't for our many enemies,

we'd soon run you out of house and home, I guess. Seems like everyone and everything are our enemies. Eagles swooping down from the sky carry us off. So do hawks. Owls can't seem to forget us. Cats love us -- love to eat us, I mean. Dogs, too. Traps and poisons carry us off. How you men are hunting us! I wonder what's coming next!

"Yes, I'm shy and elf-like, but there's nothing shy about my appetite. I'll make you shy a fruit tree or two -- if you don't watch out. I don't like to brag, but these days even a rabbit must stand up for himself.

"I want to tell you a little bit about my early days. It just happened, that I was born in Missouri. I might just as well have been born 'most any place in the United States. There are rabbits almost everywhere. I really don't remember much about it. Mother says I was only about as big as your thumb. Well, there was a deep cow track in a pasture near some woods. Grass had grown up all around it the year before. Then the grass died down and turned brown. Mother found that old track hidden away under the fallen grass. She lined it with grass. She pulled out a lot of her own fur and finished it off with that. Pretty soon that place was as snug and warm as -- a rabbit's nest!

"Well, that was my first home. I had a flock of brothers and sisters -- about 7 altogether, I think. It's hard to remember.

"Mother says she had an awful time satisfying our appeties. Oh, we come by our appetites honestly enough, I guess. Our mouths opened long before our eyes. Young cottontails are blind, you know. But always hungry.

"Careful as we were, though, things began to happen to us. One night we were in some man's garden when a big cat pounced right out of nowhere, grabbed my cousin, and ran off. Dogs got others. Hawks flew down and picked some of us off. Everything seemed to be against us.

I like good things to eat and plenty of them. So I hunt around close to the place where I was born. One day I went into an apple orchard. I was mighty hungry and the trees looked like a good meal. But, as I looked around, every last tree had wire, or sticks, or something else wrapped around the bottom so I couldn't get a single nibble of that bark. I reached as high as I could, but couldn't get at that food. So I left and went to another orchard which hadn't been fixed that way, and got in a big meal of sweet, tender bark. The man who owned the place saw our tracks and POISONED some oats and left them in the orchard. He got the directions from the U. S. Department of Agriculture bulletin No. 702. It tells all about cottontail rabbits. He scattered the oats out in the orchard, never leaving more than a tablespoonful of the grain in a single place. He even scattered that out a lot. Quite a few of my friends ate those oats and stretched out and died.

Later, when the snow piled up higher around the trees, we went out in that man's orchard who had put wire pro-tec-tors around his trees, and ate the bark on some of his best young fruit trees. We found we could reach over the pro-tec-tors then.

I finally learned to look out for guns, dogs, traps, and such things that were getting away with a number of my best friends. One of my best friends went into a hole one day and was never seen alive again. He thought it was a burrow.

I guess it was one of those traps. Next day we saw, from a distance, a man carrying my friend away.

I'm small and shy, but I'm stirring up a lot of talk. I make valuable food and men like to get out their dogs and guns and hunt me. They tell me that in some states I'm protected as game. Way things have been going, I thought everybody was after me. In fruit growing and truck gardening districts, farmers don't like me and there's a lot of rivalry between sportsmen and farmers to have their views represented in the game laws about me. They say though that the interests of the two groups don't oppose each other so seriously.

I've told you what I like and what I don't like. Hope I haven't been too personal about myself. I'm pretty modest, but there are certain times when even a rabbit's got to stick our his jaw and stand up for himself.

ANNOUNCEMENT: If you want to find out how to protect your trees and gardens from rabbits, send for Farmers' Bulletin 702, "Cottontail Rabbits in Relation to Trees and Farm Crops." It will give you some information. Naturally, he doesn't want to give away all of the various ways that man can rid him from their orchards.